

# From Alexander McMunn to Hezekiah Foard:

## Maryland soldiers in Cecil County after the revolutionary war



In the last years of the revolutionary war, a number of Maryland soldiers and generals from the First Maryland Regiment, part of the Maryland 400, were returning to their homes in Cecil County.

On December 23, 1778, in the midst of the war, [Alexander McMunn](#), a soldier within the First Maryland, married Agnas Jake in Cecil County, with the ceremony conducted by Reverend Thomson. Others had more established roots in the county. In 1780, [William Dawson](#), a former private in the First Maryland and serving three years in the Second Maryland, settled down. On December 29 of that year, he married a woman named Elizabeth Graves. This marriage was affirmed by a minister, named William Thomson, from an Episcopal Church in Elkton, Maryland. The following year [John Sears](#), recently released from captivity following the Battle of Camden, transferred to the Fifth Maryland, in January, becoming a second lieutenant and serving as a recruiter in Elk Neck for the regiment, specifically pulling in individuals from Cecil and Kent counties, and others living along the Mason-Dixon line.

In the same year that John Sears became a recruiter or perhaps the one following it, 1782, [Andrew Meloan](#), a former corporal, married a woman in her late twenties named Rachel Zilerfrow/Zillerfrow, who had married once before to a man named John Zilerfrow. In the years that would follow, Andrew and his wife Rachel would have eight children: Permelia, Thomas, Elizabeth, Andrew Jr., Izabel,

Obediah, Alexander, and Perry O. By 1783, Dawson was still living in Cecil County, but barely hanging on. He was a "pauper," living off land that he likely rented with nine other inhabitants. A 29-year-old Irish-born man, [Robert Ratliff](#), who had served as a soldier in the First and Second Maryland regiments, had different circumstances. By 1783 he was living with his relative, James, who owned four horses and 150 acres of land.

Two years later, some of the Marylanders were marrying and establishing families. On July 23, Sears married a woman named Mary Dutton. The same year, former Lieutenant of the First Maryland, [Hezekiah Foard](#), returned to Cecil County where he was likely born. On December 14, he married a woman named Sarah Lawrensen. Over the years they would have three children: Hezekiah Jr, Richard, and Josiah.

Jumping forward another two years, Marylanders were cementing themselves more in Cecil County. On October 13, Ratliff married a woman named Mary Kirk. Only three years later, on December 23, 1800, he would marry another woman named Anne Husler likely because his wife died. Later, she would die and he married again to a woman named Elizabeth, who survived him. He would have two children named James and Elizabeth coming from one of these three marriages.

The same year that Marylanders were settling down in Cecil and the Constitutional Convention was being debated, Foard was expanding his possessions. He bought, with his brother Josiah, six horses, a few cows, two sheep, and other amenities needed for their farm sitting on Bohemia Manor. For the next 46 years, he would live on this manner with enslaved laborers, his children, wife, and other supplies needed to keep the farm functioning. In later years, he would negotiate and acquire huge amounts of land within the county, expanding his social status.

In 1789, Foard and Sears received bounty land in Western Maryland (west of Fort Cumberland) for their military service. Sears received such land on June 17, totaling 200 acres, but no papers from his application have survived. Regardless, there is no doubt that the land sat vacant until 1834. Foard had similar circumstances. He was also issued 200 acres divided into four lots. But he did not claim it, so it sat vacant possibly because he saw it as "good for nothing."

The following year, 1790, [John Lowry](#), formerly a private of the First Maryland, who had formerly lived in Harford County, was living in Cecil. He was living with his wife and possibly two children, in Elk Neck. Possibly they were living on a 100-acre land tract, which Lowry had leased to Samuel Redgrave, a wealthy Cecil County man, nine years earlier. The tract, called "Tedart," sat on the west side of the Elk River, and had been owned by Lowry's father, James, before his death.

In the later 1790s, Foard was continuing to buy and sell land. Apart from helping to sell the 586 acre estate of Cecil resident, Thomas Richardson, he served in the Maryland Militia. He served as a major in 49th Regiment from 1794 to 1799 when he resigned. He also served as a Justice of the Peace in Cecil from 1792-1794. He would again serve in this position, appointed by the Governor of Maryland, from 1824-1829 and 1831-1833.

By the early 19th century, many of these Marylanders were still living in Cecil County. By 1810, Dawson was living in the Bohemia Manor area of Cecil, staying there until 1810, his wife Elizabeth

and one child. Two years earlier he had petitioned the Maryland House of Delegates noting his military service and "praying to be placed on the pension list." By 1810, the House of Delegates would endorse his plea as a "meritorious soldier in the revolutionary war" giving him a pension of the half-pay of the private because of his old age. This would continue for the years to come. As the years passed, Dawson would move from state to state. By 1812, he would have moved back to Cecil County and would have settled in Elkton, Maryland.

[George Lashley](#), a former private of the First Maryland, would be in a similar situation. He had likely been born in Cecil County and continued to live in the state after the war. On April 25, 1816, he would marry a 41-year-old woman named Jane Bashford. In later years, he would receive a federal pension, despite losing his discharge papers. He would still be living in the same county but had no children, only his wife. By 1827, even with his memory failing him in previous years, he would receive payment from the State of Maryland equal to half pay of a private as a result of his service in the Revolutionary War. He continued to receive these payments on a quarterly basis until his death on March 4, 1831 at age 76. After his death, his legal representatives, Mary Sproul and Nancy Lashly, the relation o the latter not known, would receive money that was due to him before he had died.

Foard had a different situation. While he was living in Cecil, He would serve as a justice on the Cecil County Levy Court, which handled tax allotment, three non-consecutive terms (1801-1803, 1811-1812, and 1821-1823). He would also hold other civil positions such as commissioner of the tax, which he would hold for two three-year terms, lasting from 1797 until 1806. By 1821, the Maryland General Assembly would grant him half-pay of a lieutenant for his "meritorious services."

The political affiliation of Foard is more clear than the others. In April 1821, the same year he had received half-pay from the Maryland General Assembly, he chaired a meeting of the "democratic republicans of Cecil County" in an Elkton, Maryland house where the participants would pick electors for the upcoming election for the Maryland Senate. At this same meeting, candidates for the Republican Party (also called the Democratic-Republican Party, existing from 1791 to 1828) in the autumn elections were also announced. Later, the proceedings of the meeting were announced Baltimore Republican papers. By the time autumn rolled around, the Republicans were victorious in a landslide. Fourteen of the open positions were garnered by them, with the Federalists only gaining four electoral positions, with the party only four years away from dissolution.

By 1828, Foard was still a farmer on Cecil's Bohemia Manor. In his federal pension application, he claimed claimed that he was a lieutenant in the Second Maryland, and on August 29, this pension was granted. Five years later, on February 16, 1833, he would died at age 81 at Bohemia Manor, owned, at the time, by his son. Obituaries appeared in the *Salem Gazette* (Massachusetts), *Spectator* (New York), *Commercial Advertiser* (New York), *Newark Daily Advertiser* (Newark, New Jersey), *Easton Star* (Easton, Maryland), *Brattleboro Messenger* (Brattleboro, Vermont), and *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), all praising him highly. At the time of his death, he was a well-off individual. He owned a carriage and harness, a walnut desk, and a looking glass. In the years after his death, money of his estate would be distributed, with the estate divided evenly between his three sons, and Bohemia Manor would be sold off to the Bayard family.